



Penne With Ricotta and Asparagus

Sea salt	15 ounces whole-milk ricotta
1 1/4 pounds thick asparagus, ends trimmed	2 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound penne rigate	2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1 clove garlic, peeled	

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Season with enough salt that the water tastes salty. Add the asparagus and cook until tender but still firm, about 4 minutes. Lift out the asparagus with tongs and transfer to an ice bath. Cut into $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch slices, leaving tips intact.

Bring the water back to a boil and add the penne.

Meanwhile, rub a large serving bowl with the garlic. Add the ricotta, olive oil and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the pasta cooking water; blend. When the pasta is done, drain it (reserving some water) and add it to the ricotta mixture. Top with the asparagus and half the Parmesan cheese, then fold everything together. Season to taste, adding some reserved pasta water if needed. Divide among 4 shallow bowls and sprinkle with remaining cheese. *Serves 4.*
